

# All People Following

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[0:00] Good morning. Around this time of the year back in 1988, but a sunny afternoon during the weekday, a couple of months before his 18th birthday, a young Asian man was walking home in his high school uniform.

As he walked along the main street in Sydney, Eastern Suburb, an Aussie man approached him. With a bit of hesitation and a friendly smile, the gentleman asked this young man, Do you know Jesus?

Would you be interested in coming to my church to have a look? The young Asian man was excited to be invited because he was praying to God for forgiveness and direction to get back to the right relationship with him not long before their encounter.

The young man who recently just come from overseas with his family has been exploring the freedom and nightlife that the red light district of Sydney has to offer for the last six months. Still, he knows what he was doing was not suitable for someone who calls himself a Christian at the back of his mind. So he got down on his knees and prayed.

[1:18] Before migrating to Sydney, he has been going to a youth group very irregularly for about five years. Over those five years, at the beginning of each year, he would set his New Year resolution to read his Bible and go to church regularly.

But four flats on those resolutions in the first quarter of the year. This time, while he's in a foreign country, God sent an Aussie to help him.

They studied the Bible together and a young Asian man got baptized two weeks before he turned 18 and committed his life to God. Even though there were a few years that he had slipped back to his own way, God had not let go of him or forsake him.

Even after many life mistakes, he was charged and convicted on a taxation issue and ended up with a criminal record. God is still using him to serve in a local church today.

Today, after 30-odd years, this now not-so-young man got to enjoy worshipping God with Christians in his church. He gets to serve God because an Aussie man took up his courage to approach him, give him an invitation to look into the Bible together and teach him to obey Jesus' teaching.

[2:43] What that Aussie man did was what we just read out from Matthew chapter 28, what Jesus commanded the 11 disciples. It was part of the last words spoken by Jesus before his ascension.

The ultimate goal of discipleship is all people following Jesus. Matthew recorded during these final words of Jesus spoken on a mountain in Galilee at the end of the gospel.

He also recorded at the beginning in chapter 4, Jesus called the first four disciples by the Sea of Galilee to follow him and he would send them out to fish for people.

God's care for human beings and all his creative work works in a cycle, in a circle.

He always brings to fruition what he has started. He called his first disciples beside the Sea of Galilee and called them to the mountaintop of Galilee to send them out on a mission to complete what he set out for them to do.

[3:56] So let's read again from chapter 28, verse 16 in the book of Matthew. Matthew 28, 16.

Then the 11 disciples went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them.

When they saw Jesus, they worshipped him. The Jesus that they saw is a crucified, resurrected Jesus. Three days ago, he died on the cross and was buried, but now they see him.

And it is suitable for them to worship him. But at the same time, some doubted. Do you find it somewhat unfitting that the 11 disciples would doubt in the presence of the risen Jesus?

What do you associate doubt with? The 11 disciples were not in a subtle opposition or stubborn disbelief towards Jesus.

[ 5 : 07 ] There were hesitation and uncertainty. When they saw someone, when you see someone in a state of troubled, indecision, with hesitation and uncertainty, what do you feel?

Do you associate doubt with a negative or positive feeling? Do you encourage others to identify and address their hesitation and uncertainty?

or do you get frustrated with that person? The 11 disciples saw the risen Jesus and worshipped him, but some doubted. Would it be because they are not clear or sure that the one they are seeing is the resurrected Christ?

The passage say, when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them to speak to them. Would it be that when they saw Jesus, it's actually from a distance? And from a distance, being not so close is where doubt will trouble us. How is your relationship and intimacy with God?

[ 6 : 17 ] Is it close enough to make sure you can identify your doubts about him and address them? Or is it so far that it's full of space that many things can creep in to block your view and connection with God?

To cause you trouble and heartache in your journey following him? Proximity can help us see things clearer. So Jesus came close to us to make sure we can see things of God clearly.

Looking at today's passage, we should be encouraged that we are like these 11 disciples in so many ways. In our walk with Jesus on our journey to be his disciple, our worship of this recent Jesus is often mixed with doubts, hesitation, and questions.

We should be encouraged that Jesus gives this great command to these very fallible disciples. He does not say, because you have doubted me, I'm going to find other disciples to carry out my commission.

It's simply too important to entrust to you. No, it's to this very ordinary group of people that he entrusted the mighty task of telling the world what he does for them and how to be right with God.

[ 7 : 48 ] Jesus entrusted the gospel's proclamation to us fallen human, those that are full of hesitation and uncertainty. Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Then Jesus came to them, Jesus approached them to make sure they see him clearly. He came to make sure there's no space for any God's unwanted thing between God and us.

He came to assure the 11th disciples of his authority and with that authority, he sent them out. So what kind of authority does Jesus have?

He has all authority in heaven and on earth, given to him by God, even the power and authority to overcome death. Jesus said, the reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life willingly and to take it up again.

[ 9 : 03 ] No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and I have authority to take it up again.

Because of Jesus, we can see death differently. Because of Jesus, death no longer stings. God has given us victory over death and sin through our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is worthy of all our praises. Jesus lived a perfect life and died a sinless death on our behalf. He died a sinless death to replace our disobedient, sinful life with his perfect obedience.

God has done for us. God entrusted us to tell the world of this good news, to tell of who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

God's authority is the basis of Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations, of all people. We're not only there to go to all nations because Jesus has all authority, but we must also go for the Lord of all has commanded us to do it.

[ 10 : 37 ] Verse 19, says, therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

From the original language, make disciples of all nations is a fundamental driving force of this command. Jesus is commanding the eleven disciples to make disciples of all nations by going, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded them.

Hesitate at first, but later we can see these eleven disciples from the book of Acts and from the rest of New Testament that they obeyed this command of Jesus as the Spirit leads them to break through cultural barriers after cultural barriers in the proclamation of the gospel.

After their encounter at the mountaintop of Galilee, the disciples went back to Jerusalem to wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit from God. After they received the gift, the disciples proclaimed the gospel from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria to Asia Minor and Rome.

The gospel went from the Middle East to Africa to Europe to America to Australia and Asia. The good news of Jesus goes from the East into the West and back into the East in a full cycle as a rule of how God cares for human beings and everything he had created.

[12:25] God never stopped working from the day he created us. Jesus said, my father is always at work to this very day and I too am working.

But today, not many Christians consider this command to make disciples of all nations as a must do. Not many Christians are doing what that Aussie man did with the young Asian man in the main street of one of Sydney's eastern suburbs 30 years ago.

God's great commission to make disciples of all nations has become a great omission in many Christians' life. We must be clear from today's message that we are not faithful disciples of Jesus if we are not intentionally seeking to make other disciples of our Lord Jesus.

Becoming and being a Christian is fundamentally other person centered. We become a disciple to make other disciples. Christian, a follower of Jesus, a disciple, is not just a regular church goer that does a good deed to tick the box to make us feel good about ourselves.

A faithful disciple of Jesus, intentionally seeking to make other disciples of Jesus by sharing the confidence they hold in Christ, their faith.

[14:03] Some Christians may say, I do invite people to come to Sunday service or events. I invite them to the activities we have at church. That's a good start.

But what is the next step after they come? what is intentionally seeking to make them disciples of Christ look like? Do you know what barriers they face and what kind of doubts they might have? Are you speaking Jesus into those issues and their lives? What is the next step for you and for your friend in being a disciple?

What barrier is God calling you to break through as you engage in this enormous task of sharing Christ with all the nations and people?

We are to make disciples by going. We must go, make a move, reach out to someone, whether this person is in the other land, lives next door to us or is a work colleague or someone in your household or your relatives.

[15:22] Whoever we are, wherever we live, we need to be ready to go. Go to the next bedroom, go to the next household unit, go around the corner, go to the adjoining workstation or as God calls you, go to the other side of the world.

as we go, we are to bear witness to the good news of Jesus by word and deeds. There's a very well produced gospel material called Two Ways to Live.

If you're not sure how to tell others what God has done for them, this is a very good material to pick up and I have left a few copies out there for you. And there will be a workshop on how to use them very soon as well.

In terms of bearing witness by our deed, one thing that makes early Christians stand out among others are their benevolent works and their loving actions towards each other.

I have spoken about what action to take last week. Please go to our website or our app to review that sermon from last week. We are to make disciples by going and also to make disciples by baptizing.

[16:43] Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is an outward sign of the inward reality, an act of initiation and conversion.

Baptism breaks through any language and cultural barriers. baptism is one of the most influential and effective show and tell of the gospel message.

It is such a great joy to be part of someone's initiation into a lifelong journey with God and pledging our support and guidance along the way.

We are to make disciples by going, we are to make disciples by baptizing, and we are to make disciples of all nations by teaching them to obey everything that Jesus has commanded them.

And most importantly, we are to teach, what we are to teach is not just head knowledge. We are to teach them to obey Jesus' command.

[18:10] In today's culture and setting, we are all time poor and information overloaded. People pursue head knowledge and quick results.

We want to be seen as a well to do. And we are concerned about FOMO, fear of missing out. It goes against our culture to submit ourselves to a person or some objective truth, especially when we uphold Jesus as the only way to be saved and get back in a great relationship with God. In becoming a disciple of Jesus, it takes time and commitment when obedience is our goal. And that's why being a disciple is a lifelong journey.

And we need external help, the help of the Holy Spirit to ourselves to get us through. As we teach, we must make sure we include the command in today's passage from Matthew 28.

disciples of Jesus that we made. The disciples of Jesus that we made ought to make disciples of all nations by going, baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching others to obey everything Jesus has commanded.

[19:35] We ought to engage in mission to make disciples of Jesus, whether cross-cultural or otherwise, with great confidence, because our confidence comes not from ourselves, but Jesus.

We can entirely depend on Jesus for our confidence because he loves all people, even his enemies, and is regularly at work, turning people to him by his mighty power.

And Jesus told his disciples to make sure and look out for one thing at the end of today's passage. At the end of verse 20, after he told them and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you, and surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.

The original language of the word surely have a force of making sure of this. Behold, open your eyes to see. Knowing some of his disciples doubted, Jesus gave them an antidote to their doubt. He gave them something to be sure of or to make sure of. Some scholars have read this sentence as a promise that conditioned whether the disciples obeyed Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations.

[21:03] However, it's more appropriate to look at this as, look at the sentence, I am with you always to the very end of the age as a factual statement.

Jesus conquers sin and death by becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross. And God raised him from death. God was pleased at his foolish joy in Jesus and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

And with all the authority in heaven and on earth given to him, Jesus is confident that he has lost none of those the Father gave him.

He has kept all those disciples God called according to his purpose to the end. To make disciples of all nations is to confirm and realize that Jesus does have all the authority in heaven and on earth. As we break all the cultural and ethnic barriers to make disciples of Jesus, we will realize Jesus is with us all the time to the very end of the age.

[22:27] That no matter how we are failing, whatever doubt we might have, he will complete what he set out to do. And what is being with Jesus all the time to the very end of the age look like?

It will be another mountain top experience as proclaimed in the Old Testament passage we read out today from Isaiah 25. Isaiah 25, verse 6, it says, on this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich fruit for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine.

He will destroy the shroud that enfold all peoples, the sheets that cover all nations. He will swallow up death forever. The sovereign Lord will wipe out the tears from all faces.

He will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken. All the time to the very end of the ages, we'll be enjoying a feast of rich food, a banquet of aged wine, with all peoples from all nations.

Multi-ethnic, multicultural gathering, who enjoy each other's company, praising and worshipping God with great multitude that no one could count.

[23:57] From every nation, tribe, people, and language, intentionally careful and encouraging each other to obey Jesus' teaching and command as we gather regularly in groups of various size.

Death has been swallowed up forever. No more fear of death. There will be no more tears or disgrace, for the Lord has spoken, and his disciples proclaim, surely this is our God.

